

One Year Ago in Figure Four Weekly (Issue 238)

by Bryan Alvarez

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Figure Four Weekly #238

Gary Albright, 36, died in the ring during a WXW show in Hazelton, PA on January 7th after suffering a massive heart attack.

Albright was working a match against local wrestler Lucifer Grimm (Bill Owens) on a show promoted by his father-in-law Afa Anoa'i. Albright delivered a powerslam and then went for a German suplex. Fans in attendance said that Albright started moving slowly and it was clear at this point that something was wrong. Owens suddenly hit what was basically a Diamond Cutter, and Albright went limp. Owens immediately sensed something was wrong and called for help. Jack Hill, another local worker who wrestles as Mad Russian and is a trained EMT, hit the ring and began CPR. A few of the fans said it took as long as 20 minutes for the ambulance to arrive, but usually in situations like that it seems like it takes forever for anything to happen. Once EMT's arrived they hooked Albright up to a heart monitor and a defibrillator in mid-ring and attempted unsuccessfully to revive him. He was subsequently taken out on a gurney and pronounced dead at the hospital.

Albright, who was a great amateur wrestler in college, made his pro debut in late 1987 as Vokhan Singh for Stampede Wrestling. His first match was actually against the late Brian Pillman. He quickly won the International Tag Team Titles with partner Mukhan Singh (Mike Shaw) from the British Bulldogs. They lost the titles shortly thereafter to Beef Wellington and a young Chris Benoit. Albright was voted 1988 Rookie of the Year by the readers of the Wrestling Observer Newsletter.

Although he wrestled a few WCW matches as a jobber and one match for ECW in 1996, most of his career was spent overseas. Albright's first international run came in 1991 when he debuted for the strong-style UWF in Japan, which at the time was the hottest promotion in the world. In his first match, he knocked out Yoji Anjo. Because of his size (at 6'5" he dwarfed everyone else in the company, most of whom were around 5'8" or 5'9"), he was pushed as a monster foreign heel into an eventual feud with Antonio Inoki, who he knocked out during their first singles match in 1992. This led to a rematch a few months later which Albright lost. Albright was eventually scaled back as the top heel following the debut of Vader. In 1994, Albright finished third in the UWF Best of the World tournament after a win over Kiyoshi Tamura. Albright was eventually pushed to a main event title match against Vader in 1995, which he lost via submission. In late 1995, UWF signed a working agreement with New Japan and Albright quit the company.

He resurfaced in All Japan and after limited success as a singles wrestler made a pretty big name for himself in the tag scene. He teamed with Stan Hansen to win the Double Crown Titles from Toshiaki Kawada and Akira Taue in January of 1996, but lost the belts back a few weeks later. He would win the titles back the following year with partner Steve Williams. He also competed in four annual Champion Carnival tournaments, finishing in seventh place every time. Albright's final match with the company was a victory over Masao Inoue last month, and he was scheduled to go back next month for the Excite Series 2000 tour which begins February 12th.

Albright's funeral was scheduled for January 14th in Pensacola, FL. Cards and letters can be sent to his wife Monica care of Afa Anoa'i, PO Box 251, Whitehall, PA 18052-0251.

Awesome retains at ECW PPV

The first PPV of the new Millennium, ECW Guilty as Charged on January 9, was a pretty good show. There was the usual undercard nonsense and the expected horrible match by New Jack, but when all was said and done there were at least three good to great matches and one damn cool main event. What more can you ask for nowadays?

Joey Styles and Cyrus opened up the show but were quickly interrupted by Joel Gertner. He did his thing, flipped off Cyrus, and then left. The perverted crowd popped for this as would be expected.

1. CW Anderson d. Mikey Whipwreck. This was your basic opener. Mikey took one really good bump over the guardrail and into the crowd early. Lots of action, but it wasn't particularly good. Mikey hit the Stunner, but Lou E. Dangerously pulled the referee out of the ring at the two count. Lou then hit Mikey with his phone and Anderson killed him with a spinebuster for the pinfall. *1/4

2. Simon Diamond & Danny Doring & Roadkill d. Nova & Kid Cash & Jazz when Roadkill pinned Chris Chetti. Read that again. Yes, it was the old Paul Heyman Special. Early in the match, Big Dick Hertz showed up and apparently kidnapped Jazz. This was basically an excuse for the commentators to make a bunch of Big Dick jokes. Then, Cash, Jazz, Simon and Dick all disappeared and were never seen again. So Doring and Roadkill destroyed Nova for awhile. Chris Chetti ran out and jumped up on the apron, so the referee decided to let him become involved in the match. Chetti tagged in and ran wild, setting up the old train wreck spot with everyone doing dives to the outside. Even the referee did one. Really. Electra ran in so they could have an excuse to show a woman in G-string underwear. Roadkill ended up hitting Chetti with a Generic Splash for the pinfall. If that wasn't mind-numbing enough, the Dupps then ran in and attacked everyone. Nova made the save. When things are so overbooked that I have to fill up one full page of notes to get it straight, you know that's going to translate into a confusing match. *

Spike Dudley cut a "shoot promo" talking about how he was "not acting" and was going to hurt Awesome later. Uh huh, sure.

3. Yoshihiro Tajiri & Super Crazy d. Jerry Lynn & Little Guido. Corino came out and babbled for awhile which led to Paul Heyman making this special match. I'd go into all the details, but it would take five pages. It didn't matter to me why the match was made, all that mattered was whether or not the match rocked. And it did. Guido was billed as 201, although he looked about 150 tops. Lots of great moves and really good wrestling in this match. Lynn and Tajiri exchanged frankensteiners and then Tajiri German'd him for a nearfall. They did double powerbomb and double tornado DDT spots for nearfalls. Guido tossed in a basic legdrop at this point to bring the match back down to Earth. The idiot fans chanted "TABLE!" midway through. They didn't get it, thank God. Finish saw Guido hit his own partner with the Tomikaze and Crazy made the cover. Tajiri then kicked Crazy and hit Lynn with a brainbuster for the pinfall. The ending was overbooked and it got confusing trying to remember who was with who and who was turning on who. That was too many "who's". Still a great match. ***1/2

Afterwards, Tommy Rich, Jack Victory and Steve Corino hit the ring. Corino cut a promo and ran down Dusty Rhodes. Of course, the Dream showed up, got funky like a monkey and hit everyone with fat elbows. Rhino then ran in and clotheslined Dusty almost out of his cowboy boots. They gave him a good clubberin' and stomped a mudhole in him, if you will. The locker room emptied to clear the ring. It was funny seeing the good guys and the bad guys running in to make the save for ol' Dusty.

New Jack cut a promo and told a story about how he once walked around for a week with a knife in his ass (he really said this). If New Jack just talked and never got in the ring he'd be one of my favorites.

4. Angel beat New Jack. Angel used to be "Spanish Angel", but now he's black. I'm not sure how that works. Your typical New Jack match with bad wrestling accompanied by equally bad music. Actually, the wrestling was far worse than the music, now that I think about it. Vic Grimes and Tony DeVito got involved. After a brawl in the crowd, Jack dropped Grimes right on his head with the worst suplex I've ever seen in my life, and that includes suplexes by guys at our training school that have been wrestling for one day. Jack hit his patented Scary Dive Off A Really High Thing. Back in the ring, Jack hit Angel with some stuff and Angel responded with the most business-exposing overselling in the history of the company. Angel then hit Jack with a shovel and pinned him. Was this ever bad. 1/4*

Rob Van Dam cut a very long promo with Fonzie. When he was done, Fonzie went over to Sabu's dressing room and cut a promo for him. What a turncoat. Fonzie said that if Sabu didn't beat Rob Van Dam, he would leave the company. Sure.

5. Rob Van Dam beat Sabu to retain the ECW TV Title. They did some stuff. The first scary highspots came about 45 seconds into the match, which tells you the kind of build and pacing the match had. Rob Van Dam did some flips. Sabu did an armbar, forgetting he wasn't in Japan. Sabu did do this really cool splash off the top rope to the floor through Van Dam and a table. They did a dueling chairs spot and then Sabu applied a camel clutch which literally not one

single person in the building actually thought would be the finish. The referee took a bump and Sabu hit his triple jump moonsault. Since the referee was out, Sabu went for a second one and turned it into a legdrop. This time the referee counted but Rob kicked out. Fonzie got involved near the finish and took a Van Daminator for his troubles. He sold it like he was dead and literally didn't get up until it was time to start the next match. Sabu went for another triple jump, but Rob pulled the chair on top of himself so Sabu got hurt on the move. Van Dam then hit the frog splash for the pinfall. He does have a dope frogsplash. I guess Sabu has to leave forever now. **1/4

Impact Players cut a promo. Pretty horrible.

Joey Styles said: "We built this company on honesty." Actually, they built the company on professional wrestling, which may be the most dishonest thing in the world.

6. Justin Credible & Lance Storm d. Tommy Dreamer & Raven to win the ECW Tag Team Titles. They brawled everywhere and the good guys put the bad guys through tables near the ramp. The bad guys took over in the ring and beat up Dreamer. The wrestling was good for the most part, but the crowd really wasn't into it. Shockingly, Tommy Dreamer bled. Raven finally got the hot tag and ran wild. Credible hit him with the tombstone but Raven kicked out to a big pop. Storm got backdropped over the top and a catfight broke out. Credible went to cane Francine, but Raven tackled her and took the cane shot for her. What a hero. He was so heroic that Credible immediately tombstoned him on his head or the pin. ***

7. Mike Awesome d. Spike Dudley to retain the ECW Title. Spike, who said earlier that he was not acting, wore his fake glasses to the ring. Before the match started, Spike set up six or seven tables around ringside. Of course, as soon as the bell rang he went through all of them. Most of this match consisted of Awesome beating the living shit out of Spike. The only really bad spot was when Spike went to do a tope and caught his leg on the middle rope. If Awesome hadn't been there to catch him, Spike would have probably fallen headfirst to the cement and been screwed up big-time. Crowd showed their appreciation for Awesome's life-saving catch by chanting "YOU FUCKED UP!" at Spike. Yahoos. They brawled on the top rope and Spike shoved Awesome off and hit a DOUBLE FOOTSTOMP. That may be the first time I ever saw that in the United States and IT RULED. Do you know that the women in Japan do moonsault footstomps? It's true. In the scariest spot of the Millennium, Awesome did a springboard clothesline into the first row. The move itself wasn't scary, but when Awesome landed he slipped on some spilled beer and CRASHED AND BURNED on the cement. There was beer and piss on the floor after that one. Spike hit an Acid Drop through a table, but when he went for a second one Awesome tossed him off through another table. Those tables are 25 bucks each. No wonder ECW was bouncing checks last year. Awesome finally hoisted Spike over his shoulder, climbed up to the top rope, and LAUNCHED HIM INTO ORBIT. Spike burned up on re-entry, bumped through a table and got pinned. The finish was spectacular but, looking back, it was probably the easiest bump Spike took all night. A very good main event. ***1/2

Rikidozan Most Important Wrestler of the Century

After much thought, my pick for the Most Important Wrestler of the Century is Mitsuhiro Momota, who wrestled professionally as Rikidozan.

I took several factors into consideration, the biggest of which was how much influence a particular wrestler had on the sport. I first narrowed it down to four choices, those being Rikidozan, Lou Thesz, Frank Gotch and Strangler Lewis, and eventually narrowed it down to just Rikidozan and Thesz.

I eliminated Gotch and Lewis because I felt that although each man was extremely influential in different ways during the early days of professional wrestling in the United States, neither could really be labeled as The Guy responsible for shaping the sport into what we see nowadays on TV. I don't think there is one single person in the US that can be labeled as such. And even if Gotch or Lewis could be held solely responsible, they don't possess the mainstream recognition that somebody like Rikidozan or El Santo had in their culture.

I think it would be very difficult to label someone from the United States as the most important wrestler of the century just because there were so many different people who contributed so much to the business, and I don't know that there is one person who meant so much to US wrestling that it would be dramatically different today had they never existed.

I picked Thesz second because I felt that in addition to his success and longevity in professional wrestling around the world, he was also influential through his style and training to what has become mixed martial arts competition. But again, he certainly is not the sole individual responsible for either institution, nor has he become a major cultural icon in the US.

Rikidozan, however, was not only The Guy responsible for bringing professional wrestling to Japan and creating an entertainment form that has thrived in that country to this very day, but also became a mainstream celebrity whose fame surpassed everyone in the history of this industry, including El Santo, Antonio Inoki, Hulk Hogan and Steve Austin. Rikidozan is a household name in Japan. His tomb is a national shrine. And, as perhaps the ultimate example of his mainstream credibility, he was chosen number 14 in Nikkan Sports' Man of the Century poll.

Few human beings, much less professional wrestlers, can claim to have introduced a lasting art form into their particular culture. And few can claim to have been so influential that they are believed to be among the 15 most important people in a given century. Rikidozan was both. And I feel that is solid grounds to proclaim him Most Important Wrestler of the Century.

Post office to increase rates, slow service

Special to Figure Four Weekly

The US Postal Service, which is expected to finish about \$100 million in the black this year, announced Tuesday plans to increase the cost of a first class stamp to 34 cents. The rate increase, expected to go into effect next year, will be accompanied by a corresponding slowdown in mail service and delivery speed.

"Our rate of slowdown last year was much greater than the rate of postage increase," said Einar V. Dyhrkopp, chairman of the postal board of governors. "We increased rates about 5% from 32 cents to 33 cents in January of 1999," Dyhrkopp continued. "But our delivery rate was slowed down over 40%. We feel it's only fair to increase rates again to try to justify the slower service."

Increases vary among the various types of mail. Some forms of mail will actually be cheaper to send. For example, postage for Junk Mail is expected to decrease almost 50%. However, postage for government tax rebates is expected to increase as much as 60%, making delivery of such material a several-month process.

Dyhrkopp also noted that some of the increased revenue from the rate increase would go towards training postal service workers to be more impatient and hostile with post office patrons.

Postmaster General William Henderson stressed that the 1-cent boost in first class mail rates hardly makes up for the slowed rate of service. Henderson promised future extravagant rate hikes to make up for the difference.

Internet Quote of the Week

"Old people plus ref bumps equals ratings. Russo has it all figured out."

Special Thanks

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WWF News and Notes

- It was announced last week that Steve Austin had decided to have his spinal surgery done at the Methodist Hospital in San Antonio with Dr. Lloyd Youngblood on January 17th. The original plan was for Dr. Henry Bahlman, who created the particular surgery Austin is undergoing, to do it in Cleveland on January 11th. Bahlman, in an interview with Mike Samuda, said he had no idea why Austin would make such a decision. Bahlman said: "I've explained to him that we really pioneered this type of surgery, and we've done like 1,000 patients over the years on spinal chord injury, etc., etc. And we do this stuff every week. He saw two neurosurgeons down there. I don't know who put him up to it, whether it was the trainers or other people, and they I think was

talking to him about different technical aspects of the surgery. The guys who he saw are two neurosurgeons who I don't know, and our neurosurgeons have never heard of them. They are at a community hospital in San Antonio called Methodist hospital, that's my understanding. Technically, both neurosurgeons and orthopedists are trained to do anterior surgical fusions, but this is a little different animal, and a different guy. What I was going to do was remove part of the vertical bodies of 3 and 4 to safely get this spur out and decompress his spinal chord and do the bone grafts. They talked to him about putting a plate in, which we sometimes use, I wasn't going to. That's neither here nor there. I don't think that's the reason he chose them. It's his decision. I spoke to him one more time about three days ago when the WWF called and said he was going to have it done down there. We moved him up twice, and I knew he was getting restless and I knew he was going to see someone else, but I really thought he had confidence in our institution in doing it up here. I can't imagine why he would not." Jim Ross on the Eyada show noted that the Cleveland clinic had immediately put up a huge notice on their website when they got word that Austin would be having surgery there, and Ross said Austin may have considered that a red flag. He also said that Austin had become very comfortable with Dr. Youngblood and that he had spent more time with him than any other doctor. Austin was also said to be more comfortable going to local San Antonio for checkups as opposed to having to fly all over the country. Dr. Richard Nauman will be assisting in the surgery.

- Rock walked out of an in-studio interview during the Opie and Anthony radio show last week. During the interview, the hosts brought in a regular called "Sickboy" who runs a wrestling website. Rock ended up confronting Sickboy, saying that he'd talked to the WWF for two hours on the phone the night before about the website, which apparently had an article that made racial jokes about Rock, Mark Henry and Jacqueline. Sickboy claimed that he was just the webmaster of the site and didn't see everything that went up there. Rock said that he should know these things if he is the webmaster. Rock then thanked the hosts for having him on and walked out. Sickboy, who did not write the article in question, sent out an e-mail to all of his contributors saying the site would be closed down the following day. As of this past weekend, it was still up. Rock has been very sensitive of racial issues his whole life, and talks in his book about how there were times when he got so angry that he tried to literally strangle people or rip their tongues out of their mouths. A lot of this stems from the fact that when he met his wife, it was six years before he ever met her family, because they were Cuban and didn't want her dating someone half black. This was definitely not a publicity stunt as the WWF made no mention of the incident on its website or during any of its weekend TV shows.

- Ratings for this week saw Raw score a 6.6 composite off hourly numbers of 6.3 and 6.8 to Nitro's 3.4 (3.8 and 3.0). Nitro increased exactly 0.1 from last week, which actually isn't great news because there was no football game Monday night and theoretically the bump should have been even bigger. Raw's overrun with Mankind vs. Hunter drew a boffo 7.6. The WCW overrun with Bret vs. Nash drew a pretty strong 4.1. Smackdown drew a 4.5, Thunder drew a 2.5, Heat drew a 4.0 and ECW on TNN drew a 1.2.

- Jim Ross on the Eyada show talked about how Terry Funk was still under contract with the WWF despite working for WCW. Apparently, Funk's contract rolled over in December without his

knowledge. Ross said the WWF would not be pursuing litigation, and Funk should have already signed an official release by the time you read this. He said Bulldog should be back January 17th. He said Ken Shamrock might have had his knee scoped last week, but it was a very minor surgery and would require about a week's worth of therapy. He said Mark Henry, who is out with an injured elbow, should be back in time for the Royal Rumble. He said Scott Vick, the former Sickboy in WCW, should be in at any time. He said they were waiting to debut Taz until they had a strong creative idea for his debut, and it's not certain he will be in the Royal Rumble.

- The website www.Internet.com had a very positive report about the possibilities of the WWF stock in the future, mainly due to its current success with the WWF website. The report said WWF.com was the fourth most visited sports site on the entire Net. Although companies in the Internet industry are hot, the report did absolutely nothing to help the stock. As of press time, the stock is at \$15 per share.
- Shawn Michaels and his wife Rebecca welcomed Cameron Cade Hickenbottom into the world on January 6th. The baby boy weighed 7 pounds 3 ounces.
- Congratulations to Chris Jericho, who proposed to his girlfriend Jessica Nessman on New Year's Eve.
- The Rock's book will be number one on the New York Times Bestseller list. Mark my words. It was number five on the Amazon.com pre-order list and excerpts from the book appeared in the New York Post this past Sunday. Also, I didn't see the Mick Foley book at my local Barnes & Noble until about two weeks ago, but I saw a huge stack of Rock books at that same store on the very day it was released. Jim Ross on the Eyada show said the book was expected to debut on the New York Times list next week. As of press time, the belief is that it will debut at number two.

WWF On Tour

Minneapolis, MN (January 7): Godfather d. Gangrel, Kurt Angle d. Test, Phatu d. Prince Albert, Val Venis d. Steve Blackman, Dudleys d. Edge & Christian and Hardy vs. Big Show beat Big Bossman, Too Cool d. Hollys, Chris Jericho d. Al Snow to retain the IC Title, X-Pac & Road Dogg d. Acolytes, Rock d. Hunter Hearst Helmsely—DQ when DX ran in. Kane made the save.

WWF On Television

WWF Tonedown (January 6 — Taped January 4): Stephanie was shown backstage lecturing DX about how they failed to get Rock fired Monday. She signed X-Pac vs. Show and Billy Gunn vs. Acolytes for later. They were pissed, but Hunter tried to placate them by saying he would defend the WWF Title against the winner of a random drawing later... X-Pac d. Big Show—DQ after Show shoved the referee. Show got pissed at the ref for DQ'ing him and gave him a big arse chokeslam. X-Pac tried to hit Show with a chair from behind, but Show punched it into his face.

Referees ran down to make the save but Show roared like Godzilla and they all fled. I even ran around my living room in fear because this was pretty scary for real. If Show did this in every match he'd be really cool... Cops were shown outside waiting to arrest Mankind if he arrived... Hollys beat Chyna & Chris Jericho. Chyna never even tagged in and eventually clotheslined Jericho outside the ring. Bob then hit an orange bomb for the pin. This was pretty good since we never had to see Chyna wrestle... Road Dogg went looking for Hunter backstage. Steph said he was in the bathroom. Road Dogg walked into the bathroom but discovered it was actually Tori in there. Tori screamed, thinking Dogg was going to violate her or something. Dogg yelled at Stephanie and then ran off. By the way, if I were looking for my friend and someone said he was in the bathroom, the last thing I would do is go into the bathroom looking for him... Acolytes NC Billy Gunn when Road Dogg ran in and both teams brawled into the stands. This was fun while it lasted and Billy took a killer bump off a Clothesline from Hell... Kane demanded a match with "that pervert" Road Dogg. Hunter said OK... Hunter told Dogg that if Billy interfered in his match, he would be fired. Dogg was pissed about that... Kane d. Road Dogg clean with the tombstone. That'll teach him... Hunter told Steph that Rock was going to face Kurt Angle. Steph was not happy about that... Clips of Mideon playing Fake Mankind at Universal Studios aired... Kurt Angle d. Rock—DQ. Both guys did good mic work before this match, so the crowd was really into it. Blackman came out with a kendo stick, but Rock grabbed it and used it on Angle for the DQ. So Kurt is still undefeated. Rock started walking up the ramp afterwards, but saw Angle celebrating on the Ovaltron. So he ran back into the ring and killed him with a People's Elbow... Edge & Christian & Jeff Hardy d. Al Snow & Dudleys. Pretty good. Snow destroyed the Dudleys with Head after the match... Test d. Bossman. Albert accidentally kicked Bossman leading to the pin. They teased dissension after the match... Kaientai d. Mean Street Posse. Pete Gas did a strange move that Cole identified as the "Gas Mask". Nobody in the audience had any clue what in the hell this was and there was no response whatsoever. Funaki kicked out and Cole went crazy at this feat. Lawler, deadpan, said: "He kicked out of the Gas Mask?" Rodney and Joey Abbs then did a backdrop into a powerbomb that Cole dubbed the "Stock Exchange". Later, Rodney tried a Buff Blockbuster, but accidentally hit Pete Gas and almost killed himself in the process. Cole explained that this move was called the "High Society". Funaki finally pinned Rodney for the pin. "You mean after the Gas Mask and the High Society and the Stock Exchange they still lost?" asked Lawler. That was his greatest line maybe ever. I laughed like a madman for hours. By the way, why doesn't Cole figure out what a falcon arrow, a screwdriver and an orange bomb are while he's at it?... They had the random drawing backstage. The first name was Andre the Giant. Hunter said Andre couldn't make it to the building so he'd draw again. The second name was Moolah. Hunter said this was serious and she wasn't getting a title shot. What a dick. Finkle came to draw the third name but spilled them. He finally revealed that Phatu would get the title shot. Hunter and Steph looked pissed, although it was not clear why since this was a random drawing... The fake Mankind ran into the real Mankind and got his ass kicked... Phatu d. Hunter—DQ in the main event. Rakishi worked hard and Hunter did a great job. In fact, they did such a good job that the fans actually believed Phatu might win the belt. Some really great nearfalls at the end to super heat. Stephanie finally threw the belt into the ring and Hunter KO'd Rakishi for the DQ. Too Cool came out afterwards and they did their dance as the show ended. They were CRAZY OVER. A very good Smackdown despite the fact that it was the most toned-down WWF show in years.

Raw is War (January 10 — Live): The show opened with almost every single wrestler except for the DX members coming down and surrounding the ring. "How nice," I thought. "A tribute to Gary Albright." Yeah, right. Rock got into the ring and said the wrestlers had asked him to be their spokesman. He called out Hunter and Stephanie. Backstage, X-Pac and the Outlaws told HHH and Steph to go out there alone, since they had gotten them into all this trouble. Rock told Hunter that all of the wrestlers were going to walk out if their demands weren't met. Rock's first demand was that Mick Foley be reinstated. "FOLEY!" the rubes screamed. Hunter said OK. Wild applause. Hunter added that he had planned on doing it anyway. Nuclear heat. Now THAT was funny. Rock's second demand was that there would be no more stupid stipulation matches. Stephanie said OK. Rock's third demand was that nobody could ever be fired without just cause again. Hunter said OK. Foley then ran out of the crowd and got into the ring. He challenged Hunter to a title match at the PPV. Hunter accepted. Rock then said he would be a part of the Royal Rumble. Mankind said he had some more demands, and requested a Road Dogg vs. Billy Gunn match for Raw. Hunter said OK. Mankind then requested a Hunter vs. X-Pac match. Hunter said OK to that one too. Rock then said that if DX survived all their matches, they would face the Acolytes in the main event. Hunter said OK. Rock then added that the Acolytes would team with the Rock & Sock Connection. Huge pop for that. Mankind jumped up and down and hugged Rock, who looked utterly flabbergasted that this person would ever lay a hand on his \$500 shirt. That was classic... Backstage, DX yelled at Hunter for being such a pussy and meeting all of Rock's demands... Road Dogg beat Billy Gunn clean in a decent match. Billy went for the Fame Asser but Dogg turned it into his pumphandle slam for the pin... Hardy d. Kurt Angle & Steve Blackman when Matt pinned Blackman. Angle yelled at Steve after the match... Mankind was shown torturing the fake Mankind backstage... Val Venis came down to the ring and said Edge was engaged to his sister. Val then beat Edge clean to retain the UK Title. This was pretty good. After the match, Edge told Val that he wouldn't be the best man at his wedding because Christian would be. Now that's a money angle... Hollys d. Chyna & Jericho when Bob pinned Chyna with the orange bomb. Jericho took the belt and ran off afterwards... HHH d. X-Pac with a little help from Stephanie. I was so goddamn giddy at this point from seeing so much good, clean wrestling and logical skits. The WWF rules this week... Rakishi & Too Cool d. Al Snow & Headbangers clean. Snow attacked the Headbangers after the match. Of course, Too Cool and Phatu did their dance... Mankind set Fake Mankind free, but warned him not to leave the dressing room or else... Or else what?... Godfather & D-Lo Brown DCOR Dudleys. First crappy finish of the night... Mankind hit on Tori backstage, praising her "sweaty, heaving voluptuous breasts". Then he slapped her ass and told her he'd be waiting in his dressing room. This was hilarious. Of course, an enraged Kane bolted into Mankind's dressing room and found — you guessed it — Fake Mankind. Kane kicked his ass... Test & Big Show d. Bossman & Prince Albert. Bossman accidentally hit Albert with his nightstick leading to the finish. You want to know why I don't watch Heat anymore? Because on Heat, Bossman intentionally hit Albert with the nightstick and they broke up, but that didn't carry over to the Raw show. Giant hit Albert and Bossman with a double chokeslam after... DX came down to the ring for the main event. They looked excited to be wrestling again. DX faced Acolytes & Rock & Mankind. Great heat for the match. DX finally walked out on Hunter and left him to die. Acolytes and Rock brawled with DX to the back, leaving Hunter and Mankind alone. Mankind teased putting the claw on Steph,

but Hunter made the save. They brawled at ringside. HHH grabbed the ring bell and NAILED Mankind with it. Hunter then gave Mankind a swank pedigree through the announcer's table and another inside the ring for the pin. This match ruled the goldarn world. Mankind, who was all bloody, finally snapped, tore his mask off, and BEAT HUNTER WITHIN AN INCH OF HIS LIFE. That's right, kids, Cactus Jack is back. This entire show was the ABSOLUTE BOMB.

WCW News and Notes

- One of the biggest news stories in the world Monday was the buy-out of Time Warner by America Online. This probably doesn't mean a whole lot for WCW. About the only difference will be that it pretty much doesn't even matter in the slightest anymore whether or not WCW is profitable. Say WCW loses five million dollars this year. It's parent company, the new AOL Time Warner Inc., will have a combined value of 350 billion dollars. That \$5 million loss doesn't mean jack shit anymore. Ted Turner will remain Vice Chairman of Time Warner if the merger goes through (it is still pending stockholder approval and probably won't be official until sometime next year).
- The early Starrcade buyrate is coming in at about a 0.33, which would make it the second-lowest buyrate in the history of either WWF or WCW, behind only the 1999 Fall Brawl show. The real bad news is that there was no Fall Brawl main event announced until a few days before the show aired, whereas WCW had been hyping Bret vs. Goldberg for over a month leading to Starrcade. There are already betting pools set up as to when Russo and Ferrara will be fired.
- Hogan, Sting and Goldberg are all expected back on the February 14th edition of Nitro. That Hogan sure is smart. The RAW show that night will be pushed back to 11:00 PM EST because of the Westminster Dog Show, which means Nitro will have two unopposed hours and, theoretically, draw its highest rating in a long, long time. I remember last year when this happened, Raw still beat Nitro, which was a huge embarrassment. I'm sure it's going to happen again. Hogan is expected to turn back heel rather quickly and the whole Terry Bollea thing may have been scrapped.
- Bret Hart had a very controversial Calgary Sun column this week. It was the first column since his heel turn. He said Goldberg had beaten the hell out of him (I believe he got a concussion for real) and that he'd had a tough match with "Jerry Flint" on Nitro (maybe he was reading a Hustler when he wrote this). Bret didn't bother doing much explaining as to why he did the turn, perhaps realizing that most everybody knows this stuff is a work now. He talked about how he'd zoomed out of the Arena one night in a limo as part of an angle and slipped on some ice and almost drove straight into the production truck before he regained control of the car. He said at that point he realized he'd done exactly what Owen had done when he died — a pointless stunt that would have better been handled by a pro. Bret wrote that he wasn't a stuntman. In a related story that Bret didn't talk about, they actually wanted Sid to stay in the car last week on Nitro while Bret himself drove the Monster truck over it. They explained to Bret exactly where to drive so he wouldn't kill Sid. I'm not making this up. Bret flat out said no, explaining that he was a

wrestler and not a stunt car driver. They quickly apologized, took Sid out of the car and had a stuntman drive the truck. Bret then went on a tirade about how horrible Stampede Wrestling is now. He said wrestling was a sport for adults and probably shouldn't even be viewed by kids, but in Stampede there were wrestlers who were actually 14-year-old kids. There was a TON of heat from the family about that line, particularly from Harry Smith, the 14-year-old in question. Bret, who sounded pretty depressed, finished the column writing: "So what's the point of all this? I'm not sure I know. I just know I've emptied my head and my heart and this is as real as it gets. Maybe the whole wrestling business is pathetic... including me."

- This story is a classic. It was supposed to be Kevin Nash vs. Bam Bam Bigelow at Thunder last week. Unfortunately, Kevin Nash complained the previous Monday night that he'd suffered a concussion at Nitro. You know, the show where he had to wrestle three grueling matches, the first two of which his team won without doing one single wrestling move? Nash said he got the concussion as a result of Arn Anderson hitting him in the head with a crowbar, which is particularly funny since: A) the crowbar is made of rubber; and B) there were people backstage before the show Monday that somehow knew in advance that Nash might get a concussion on the show. So anyway, instead of just scratching Nash vs. Bigelow — which had never been advertised on TV so nobody would have known the difference anyway — they instead called Canyon late Monday night and had him fly all the way in to Thunder so that he could appear on screen for exactly 13 seconds and knock out Bigelow with a champagne bottle. Why couldn't they have filmed this 13-second segment at Nitro and edited it into the Thunder show? Why couldn't they have just had Canyon and Bigelow wrestle on Thunder instead? It sucks that Canyon and Bigelow both had to suffer because Kevin Nash was such a fat, lazy, plodding, dead-weight, good-for-nothing jackass this week.

- The old guys got \$2000 each to beat up Jeff Jarrett on Nitro. What a sweet deal.

- Speaking of Nash, add him and Hall to the list of guys who want out of their WCW contracts so that they can go back to the WWF. I believe Nash actually asked for his release already but got turned down. Well, duh. Besides the fact that letting these guys go would add to the perception problems WCW is having, I believe there are other reasons why it's unlikely WCW will ever give them their release. Nash was reportedly in a better mood by the time Nitro rolled around.

- Tony Maranera said a few weeks ago on WCW Live that he'd already had 20 concussions in his short career, which is absolutely appalling. Apparently, he's still suffering some dizziness and has been kept off TV as a result. I seriously hope that this is all a joke because 20 concussions almost certainly means some major brain damage down the road.

- Dusty Rhodes was also called last week and offered the Commissioner's role, but he turned it down because he didn't feel they were offering him enough money.

- In order to further cheapen the WCW US Title, it will be on the line for all three Jarrett vs. Benoit matches at the PPV, which means it will change hands three times.

- Kidman said some interesting things on WCW Live last week. He said a lot of guys were annoyed with Tony Schiavone because they feel he doesn't work hard enough to get their matches over. Kidman said he plans to go to the Power Plant to practice his shooting star press on a crash pad. He said he used to be a bank teller and a lifeguard before getting into wrestling. The bank teller thing is funny for some reason. He also said he heard a rumor that Randy Savage and Gorgeous George had broken up.

- Two of the hot babes on Nitro were fitness models Tylene Buck and April Hunter.

- Nitro quote of the week was by Jeff Jarrett who said: "I'm going to stretch your ass like it's never been stretched before."

- Eric Bischoff had a meeting with Brad Siegel last Wednesday, allegedly to try to get out of his WCW contract so that he could look for work elsewhere. Reports are that he was turned down. Bischoff is telling people that he has absolutely no interest in returning to WCW as an on-screen character, although the feeling is he'd be happy to return as part of management. There may be more to this story.

- Most of the WCW Live crew with the exception of Mark Madden began turning on Ric Flair last week, saying he shouldn't have left the company high and dry without a Commissioner at the last second. Bob Ryder said that the Terry Funk surprise had been ruined because word leaked out on the Internet three hours before Nitro aired. Yeah, everyone in the building for Nitro had been surfing wrestling sites on the Internet in their car on the way to the show. Ryder also said that people who make as much as the wrestlers do should never put management in the position that Ric Flair did. Actually, seeing as to how WCW almost certainly wouldn't exist today had it not been for Flair, management should be kissing his ass until the day he dies. Ryder also blamed the announcers for not getting the Funk angle over better. As of press time, last week's post-Nitro show, which was flooded with angry calls, was not archived at WCW.com. Flair had a meeting with WCW management Friday and everybody came out of it feeling better. But that's all that happened. He didn't get a release but they also didn't come to any agreement as to when he'd return to TV or go back on the road. Flair's contract runs through February 9, 2001. During the final year his pay gets scaled back to \$500,000 from \$750,000, and he's not required to wrestle any dates for the company.

- Brian Adams and Brian Clark (Wrath) both re-signed with WCW and will be doing some sort of Road Warriors gimmick.

- Variety had a story last week on Nitro going to two hours. It read in part: "According to execs at Turner, the hour cut was made not to run from Vince McMahon's WWF, but to ease the load on Nitro's writers and workers and create a more coherent show." The article said WCW ratings bottomed out in late 1998 and that Thunder had been "subsequently moved" to avoid Smackdown. Actually, Thunder was still head-to-head with Smackdown when this article was written. Also, in late 1998 WCW was still beating WWF in the ratings. It didn't "bottom out" until Kevin Nash got the book.

WCW On Television

Thursday Thunder (December January 6 — Taped January 4): They showed clips from Nitro hyping up the Souled Out main event. It's good to see them actually doing that for a change. Not that any hype in the world would actually make people want to see Bret Hart and Sid wrestle... The NWO arrived at the building with Arn Anderson held hostage... Oklahoma came out to do commentary for the opener. Madusa pinned Asya to retain the Cruiserweight Title after Saturn attacked Asya behind the referee's back. After the match, Madusa yelled at Oklahoma, setting up a match between the two for the Cruiserweight Title at Souled Out. I swear this is true. Suddenly, the Filthy Animals ran down to the ring. The cameras were on them, so they missed Oklahoma hitting Madusa in the head with the barbecue sauce. That's the second time this week that production has missed a dangerous spot. The world's crappiest production... Juvie and Psicosis came out. Juvie told Tony Schiavone to hit the bricks. For the first time probably in his life, Tony stood his ground. Psicosis roughed him up, convincing Tony that he actually still was a pussy, so he started to leave. Terry Funk then came out, beat up Juvie and then powerbombed Psicosis through the table. Big pop for that. Terry got in the ring and called out the NWO. He said he wanted Arn back. Jeff Jarrett came out and said they'd do some hostage negotiations in about an hour. Funk was way over as a babyface here... NWO was shown beating up Arn backstage... Gene interviewed Booker T. He said he wanted Midnight and Stevie to get along. Stevie came out, pissed. He said Midnight was not ready to be a wrestler. Well, he's right. Stevie offered to fight Midnight if Booker thought she was ready. Booker said OK, as long as Stevie agreed to get along with her if she won. Stevie said OK, sucka... Three Count d. Chavo Guerrero Jr. & PG-13. Way too short to really say how good any of these guys really are. It was OK while it lasted. Three Count danced and sang afterwards... David snapped backstage after seeing footage of Arn getting beaten up. He ran off... Tank did commentary for Wall vs. Flynn and wasn't very good. This match was supposedly under "shootfight rules", which meant, well, I don't know what that actually meant because this sure as hell was no shootfight. Tank beat up Flynn and Wall got the pin. I can't count the number of times I've seen a guy get pinned in a shootfight. Security ran in afterwards and Tank punched out Doug Dillinger again. Maybe they can kill off Tank once and for all by booking him in a match with Doug... Jarrett d. Smiley clean in a Bunkhouse Brawl. This is Jarrett's specialty, you know. After the match, Funk came out with David Flair and kidnapped Jarrett. NWO came out and they had hostage negotiations. Nash wanted Funk at Souled Out with the stipulations being that if Nash won, he was Commissioner, but if Funk won, the NWO had to break up forever. Gee, that's a tough one to call. Funk said OK, but added that it would be under Hardcore Rules with NWO banned from ringside. Funk then challenged Bret to a Hardcore match for later with NWO banned from ringside as well. Bret said OK, but warned that he might just kill Funk. They traded Arn for Jarrett... Disco did a pick-up for the Italians. Actually, he swapped his rolex for some money, but lied to the Family that he'd roughed the guy up... Midnight d. Stevie Ray clean with a roll-up after he'd beaten her up the whole match and refused to pin her. This was surprisingly not horrible. Everybody hugged afterwards, but then Stevie turned on Booker and beat him up. Well, duh. Not a bad angle... Juvie set up Gene with a woman backstage so he could take over interviews. Gene was HILARIOUS in his role as a dirty old man and this was the funniest thing

on the whole show... Gene came out with his chick to interview DDP. Page ran down Bagwell forever. He said Bagwell got divorced because he cheated on his wife left and right, and then said the guys love Bagwell as much as the girls. Crowd was going hoss for the put-downs. Bagwell then TORE down to the ring and they got into one hell of a wild pull-apart in the stands. This was a really great segment... Bigelow cut a promo backstage. Kanyon ran in and hit him with a Champagne bottle, knocking him out. The NWO then put Bigelow in a wheelbarrow and took him to the ring so Nash could hit him with a bat for the DQ. Nash was too lazy to even lay on top of Bigelow for the pin... David & Crowbar d. Kidman & Konnan when Arn used the crowbar on Konnan. Revolution came down and attacked Rey's bad knee again. Konnan made the save with a crutch... Bret Hart NC Terry Funk when the NWO ran in. I thought they were banned from ringside? I guess technically they were backstage and then in the ring, so they never really were at ringside for any length of time. This was a really good match while it lasted. David, Daphne and Crowbar ran in for some reason and got beat up. Nash then took Funk up onto the ramp and attempted a powerbomb, but instead basically dropped the 54-year-old guy headfirst through the stage. One goddamn move in his whole repertoire and he can't even do that without killing someone. Aside from the aforementioned stuff that I hated, this was a good show.

WCW Monday Nitro (January 10 — Live): A limo arrived and Terry Funk, Arn Anderson, Larry Zbyszko and Paul Orndorff got out... Kidman and Konnan started a match with Saturn and Dean Malenko. Then David and Crowbar ran in. None of the announcers bothered to tell us who in the hell was in the match or what the rules were. Everyone beat up everyone else. Then Malenko and Saturn left. Crowbar and David hit everyone left in the ring with crowbars but were not DQ'd. They brawled into the stands and then Saturn reappeared. The Revolution attacked Rey Jr. and put him on a table. Saturn then climbed up onto this Really High Thing and splashed Rey to death. Saturn sold his own ribs and then David pinned him. This was the biggest clusterfuck ever. EMT's took Rey away as WCW quickly went to a commercial to make this look as trivial as possible... Tenay said that DDP and Bagwell would have a face-to-face confrontation later, and that if either guy attacked the other before five minutes had elapsed, they would be fined \$50,000. Right, and Sabu's gonna retire... NWO arrived. They said it was Scott Steiner's birthday and presented him with some hot babes. Too bad Steiner's birthday is in July. So if anyone has some hot babes handy, we can pretend it's my birthday too... In a shocking development, they actually aired a replay of Saturn's splash on Rey... Oklahoma came down and talked about his PPV match with Madusa that actually had never even been announced yet. Well, it's announced now. He challenged any woman to come try and beat him up. Someone watched Man on the Moon for sure. Asya accepted. Oklahoma hit her with the BBQ sauce within seconds. Madusa then came out wearing a blue wig to make the save. Oklahoma took a broom and hit her with the part you sweep with, and she sold it. The broom broke during the beating and Bobby wondered how Madusa was going to get home. Oklahoma stole the Cruiserweight belt and left. They should do a weigh-in Sunday before this match. Actually, if they laid just one of Madusa's breasts on the scale, she'd be over the 235 pound limit... Funk and Company came out to scattered boos. Funk said they would now be called the Old Age Outlaws. I'm not making any of this up. Arn promised to hunt and kill the NWO, which he never did. Larry cut a promo about tradition that everyone booed. Orndorff cut this

ATROCIOUS promo that nobody understood. NWO came out and got cheered. Well, let's see. You've got some old guys blabbing about tradition in the ring and then you've got some young cool guys with hot babes. Who did they think fans were going to cheer? Nash ran down Funk. Funk signed Jarrett to three matches on Nitro against mystery opponents with Benoit as special referee. Funk also signed Bret vs. Nash for the WCW Title. They said they wouldn't do it. Funk said if they didn't, they'd be suspended for one year without pay. Bret and Nash said they had saved their money and that was cool with them. Boy, did Funk ever look like an idiot after that. Scott Steiner tried to say something but they bleeped it out. Funk promised to wash Steiner's mouth out with soap later. This segment was an ABSOLUTE DISASTER... Bagwell and DDP had a face-to-face. There was a clock counting down five minutes, and actually it almost ended up being a countdown to RAW. This was actually a very good interview and the crowd was into it. Kimberly watched from backstage. They lasted five minutes without killing each other. Page then slapped Bagwell but got beaten up with a police baton for his troubles. Finally, an angle that may sell some PPVs... Poor Kimberly had to fly all the way in to Nitro so they could show her sitting around backstage for five seconds... Bret and Nash teased dissension backstage... Funk came out and introduced the first mystery opponent for Jarrett. It was George "The Animal" Steele. I know you think I'm making that up, but it's true. All of this is true. Jarrett hit Steele with a guitar, but Arn ran in, gave Jarrett a spinebuster, and put Steele on top for the pin. This was horrible... Gene interviewed Stevie Ray. They bleeped out the word "fruit booty" but not "damn". Whatever. Stevie wanted a match with Booker at Souled Out. Booker and Midnight came out. Booker said he would never ever ever ever ever ever ever ever ever ever ever EEEEVER face his brother in a match. Never. So Stevie slapped him. OK, Booker said, I'll do the match... Old Age Outlaws came out and introduced Tito Santana as the next mystery opponent. Finish saw everybody in the world run in. Orndorff gave Jarrett a piledriver and then Tito got the win. Match was pretty bad, but there was good heat for the finish. Tito looked in decent shape... Tank Abbott came down and made fun of Jerry Flynn. Then he challenged Doug Dillinger, saying he'd give him a free punch. Doug came out. This was really on TV during the opposed hour. Doug punched Tank and Tank beat the shit out of him until cops showed up. They handcuffed Tank. Flynn then ran down and kicked Tank in the head. That will sell exactly zero PPVs... The cage lowered and Funk announced Jimmy Snuka as the third mystery opponent for Jarrett. Larry Zbyszko and Orndorff ran in and beat up Jarrett again. The almost 60-year-old Snuka then climbed all the way up to the very top of the cage and SPLASHED JARRETT WITHOUT KILLING HIMSELF. The Lord was with Jimmy Snuka. Benoit then followed it up with a diving headbutt for good measure. By this time, everybody had forgotten the crazy dive Saturn did earlier. Snuka got the pin. OK, I'll admit it, this was the damn bomb... A drunken Scott Steiner was shown tied up backstage. Funk came in and shoved soap down his throat. Dumb... Bret Hart NC Kevin Nash. This was probably the best match Nash has had since he wrestled Shawn Michaels at an In Your House about four years ago. That's not saying this was great, because it wasn't. I don't care what anyone says, Bret is so f'n good it's pathetic. Arn ran out and hit Nash with a pipe. Sid then came down and powerbombed Bret as the cage lowered around them. Funk finally came out with a flaming branding iron and burned Nash in the belly. Nash did the most comical overselling of his career. If I were Funk I would have really burned him for that one. Decent show overall with a couple of memorable moments.

WCW On Tour

Lowell, MA (January 7): Evan Karagias d. Villano IV, Maestro d. Villano V, Jerry Flynn d. Bam Bam Bigelow—COR in a Last Man Standing match (really), David Flair & Crowbar d. Harris Twins—RD to retain the Tag Belts, Dean Malenko & Saturn d. Asya & Chavo Guerrero Jr., Dustin Rhodes d. Jeff Jarrett in a guitar on a pole match. To assure fans that nobody would have to do a clean job, all you had to do was grab the guitar to win the match. You didn't even have to make a pinfall. Meng d. Lex Luger. This show was said to be absolutely horrible.

Utica, NY (January 8): Evan Karagias d. Villano IV, Maestro d. Villano V, David Flair & Crowbar d. Harris Twins—RD to retain the Tag Belts, Dustin Rhodes d. Jeff Jarrett in a guitar on a pole match, Asya & Chavo Guerrero Jr. d. Saturn & Dean Malenko, Meng d. Lex Luger, Sid d. Bret Hart—DQ when Jarrett ran in. This show was said to be just as horrible as the one the night before.

University Park, PA (January 9): Evan Karagias d. Villano IV, Maestro d. Villano V, Jerry Flynn d. Bam Bam Bigelow—COR, David Flair & Crowbar d. Harris Twins—RD to retain the Tag Titles, Dustin Rhodes d. Jeff Jarrett in a guitar on a pole match, Asya & Chavo Guerrero Jr. d. Dean Malenko & Saturn, Meng d. Lex Luger, Bret Hart d. Sid. Despite the poor reviews for the previous two evenings, this show was said to be OK.

ECW News and Notes

- Spike Dudley's "groupie" didn't really get her teeth knocked out by Mike Awesome. She's actually been missing her two front teeth for several years and has a removable set. Insider sources suspect she got the replacement set as a Christmas gift.
- Sabu is not leaving ECW. He's probably just taking some time off to heal a variety of injuries, as he looked really beaten up and slow at the PPV.
- Amazingly, not one person suffered a major injury at the ECW PPV.
- Dusty Rhodes has agreed to come in for another set of dates beginning this weekend.

ECW On Television

ECW on TNN (January 7 — Taped): Clips aired of the Mike Awesome vs. Masato Tanaka title change from last week... Gertner and Styles opened up the show. They ran down the PPV card... A highlight video aired running down the history of the ECW Title. I'd like to see WWF try that with their Tag Team Titles. Or WCW for that matter, especially the part about how Rick Steiner and Judy Bagwell had the belts once. I hate wrestling... A "serious" Spike Dudley promo aired... Jeff Jones and Mike Awesome cut a promo... Impact Players cut their typically absurd promo. Justin Credible sure is getting big lately... Roadkill & Danny Doring d. Nova & Kid Cash & Dupps Brothers in a three-way. Dupps have never been on TNN before and the announcers

didn't bother trying to tell us who the hell they were or what their gimmick was. Somebody needs to tell Paul Heyman that a lot of people don't get to attend the shows regularly or get the Hardcore TV. Match was pretty good, actually... Justin Credible d. Tommy Dreamer in a Stairway to Hell match with help from Dawn Marie and Lance Storm. There was a catfight, as expected. These guys worked really hard and the match was good... An interview with Rhino, Corino and Jack Victory closed the show... Good overall, but not near the level of the last two weeks.

ECW On Tour

Atlanta, GA (January 7 — TNN Tapings): Nova & Kid Cash d. Danny Doring & Roadkill. The Dupps ran in afterwards and Cash apparently got his jaw broken on a botched spot. Mike Whipwreck d. CW Anderson, Jerry Lynn d. Yoshihiro Tajiri. Joel Gertner and Joey Styles opened up the show. Cyrus came out with a list of demands for Gertner from the executives in TNN. Basically, he's banned from everything he does. Super Crazy d. Little Guido. Steve Corino came out with his crew and ran down Dusty Rhodes. Rhodes made an appearance, laid everyone out with elbows, but then was mauled by Rhino. Tommy Dreamer tried to make the save but Eric Watts ran in and beat him up. Spike Dudley d. Lance Storm. Mike Awesome destroyed Spike again after the match. As a swerve, they had Spike's groupie come to the ring with the ECW Title. Raven d. Simon Diamond, New Jack d. Vic Grimes, Sabu d. Justin Credible, Rob Van Dam d. Sabu.

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